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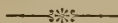








NEW BURIAL ACT AND CHURCH  
LEGISLATION.  
WARNINGS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS.



A CHARGE  
BY  
THE ARCHDEACON OF ELY  
AT  
His General Visitation, Cambridge,  
1880,  
WITH NOTES.

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The Ven. William Emery, B D., Archdeacon of Ely, held his General visitation of clergy and churchwardens on Tuesday last, November 16th, at St. Michael's Church, for the Deaneries of Barton, Bourn, Camps, Cambridge, Chesterton, and Shingay, which was largely attended. There were in attendance T. M. Francis, Esq., registrar; Rev. S. Banks, official; and Mr. S. P. Widnall, apparitor. From 10 till 11 presentments were made, policies and receipts of Fire Insurances exhibited, and other business transacted, after which came the service of Holy Communion. The Archdeacon took the chief part of the service, assisted by the following clergymen in the administration:—The Rev. S. Banks, official, who read the Epistle; the Rev. Dr. Campion, Rural Dean of Cambridge, who read the Gospel; Rev. A. H. F. Boughey, Vicar, who read the Confession; the Rev. J. Martin, Surrogate; the Revs. Canons Underwood and Sharp, and Archdeacon Lower, Rural Deans. The arrangements made by the churchwardens were very satisfactory, and though a large number communicated, the whole service, including the charge, was finished shortly after one o'clock, having commenced at 11.

After the Nicene Creed, the Registrar called over the roll, to which the clergy answered, and then the Archdeacon proceeded to deliver the following Charge:—

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF TIMES OF VISITATION.

My Reverend Brethren and Brethren of the Laity:

For some years past I have omitted a second or general Visitation, like the present, and held only an

Easter Visitation at which I have delivered a charge to the Churchwardens, on their admission, and circulated it throughout the Archdeaconry. This departure from earlier practice was not made without consultation with others in whose judgment I had great confidence. Considering the many additional opportunities of conference now supplied by revived and extended Church organization amongst us, and the much more frequent gatherings for religious services and church objects than of old, it is a question whether in future the custom which I find exists in other Archdeaconries should not be henceforth the rule in this, viz., to have only one annual Visitation for Clergy and Laity soon after Easter—the inherent right of holding other visitations during the year still remaining in force.

#### NATURE OF A GENERAL VISITATION.

“General Visitations” it should be remembered “were originally of a disciplinarian and judicial character. In course of time, however, and under the influence of various circumstances, they took the place of the two yearly Synods anciently held by the Bishops of the several Dioceses. They are in fact the only constitutional assemblies of Clergy and Laity known to the Law.” So reported years ago a Committee of the Lower House of Convocation, as I noted in my first charge. And we do well to note this again in view of the resuscitation of Discipline which is strongly pleaded for by many, with great force and reason, under the new conditions in which modern legislation seems to be placing us.

#### BISHOP'S VISITATION IN 1881.

Next year, according to the usual order, our Bishop will hold his General Visitation throughout the Diocese and mine will be pretermitted under the customary inhibition. I shall hope, however, if life and strength be granted, to visit many of the parishes separately as heretofore, and give such friendly help and advice to my brethren, as God may enable me, in their responsible and solemn duties. Should the time of the Bishop's Visitation in 1881 be such as to make it needful or desirable to admit any of the Churchwardens earlier, provision, as before, will be made to avoid inconvenience.

#### VISITATION FEES.

I may remark in passing that even when there has been more than one visitation in the year it has not been the custom to require any second fee; thus removing as far as possible any hindrance to the attendance of the Churchwardens. The question of payment of fees by the parishes at visitations, and of procurations and pensions by the Clergy, Lay Impropriators and others, has not been free from trouble and vexation! I. Personally I would willingly see an alteration in the amount and incidence to meet the new circumstances in which, by the change in the law of Church Rate and otherwise, the Clergy and

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1. See Notes at the end for this and other numbers.



Churchwardens are placed. But it has been pressed on me, that I ought not to act alone or to resign rights and dues which may materially affect others differently circumstanced. Of course no system, ecclesiastical or civil, can be carried on long, regularly or effectually, without adequate contributions towards the necessary expenses of management and correspondence, and moderate fees equitably evied do seem the fairest way of providing for such expenses. On the whole I deem it best to await further legislation on this matter of fees before making any further alteration in what, after all, can be no great burden to any.

#### PRESENTMENTS.

In the great majority of the Presentments made annually by the Churchwardens there have been few matters of urgency, and friendly consultation has in most cases hitherto availed to smooth away difficulties and complaints. The kindness with which I have been everywhere welcomed, the loving readiness with which as a rule Clergy and Laity have accepted my suggestions, the generous support and confidence vouchsafed me, not only in the Archdeaconry but in the Diocese and beyond it for many years, I would desire now gratefully to acknowledge, whilst I humbly confess how far I have fallen short of that standard of attainment in duty which I set before myself when entering on my present office.

#### WEEKLY OFFERTORY.

I am glad to find that the system of the Weekly Offertory which I have ventured again and again to recommend, in connection with freedom of worship in our parish churches, is fairly answering where tried and is growing in favour. In Cambridge it is now all but universal. Where not introduced in country churches, at the principal services for the whole congregation, the opposition comes rather from the well-to-do than the poor. Such strange opposition will I trust soon cease, and the conviction become universal that the giving of alms for the Church of God and for His poor, as a distinct part of holy worship, is both a duty and a privilege. If however the weekly offertory is to prosper, every care must be taken to give full publicity, by notice on the church door each week, both of the amount collected and the purposes for which it is to be applied. Once a year at least a carefully prepared Balance Sheet with particulars, duly audited, should be published and circulated. The Parish Magazine, which every parish or group of parishes should have, is a very convenient channel for this purpose.

I would recommend that the offertories and collections on certain Sundays in the year be devoted to special Home and Foreign objects, social and religious, and that those of the other Sundays be divided in certain proportions, fixed beforehand, for the poor, the ministry and church expenses. To guide congregations the better as to the sum they

should, as a rule, weekly contribute, it would be well for minister and churchwardens and church council, if it exist, to make a careful estimate of the amount probably required during the year, for the general purposes I have enumerated, and to lay this estimate before all. If then as time goes on it is found the due proportion has not been given, there will be fair reason afforded for urging on all a higher standard of offering, that the year may not end with a deficit nor the service of God and his poor be stinted.

#### CHARITIES AND BENEFACTIONS.

I am not quite satisfied as to the right disposal of the charities and benefactions which have been left or assigned for the repair and sustentation of the fabrics of the Churches in some parishes as well as for other pious uses. In my parochial visitations I have heard dissatisfaction expressed on this point. The whole subject might well be considered in Ruridecanal Chapter and Conference, and the hands of any brethren strengthened who may be found subjected to persecution or unfair opposition in their endeavour to see Church Trusts properly administered.

#### PARISH TERRIER AND RECORD.

It is a matter of concern to me that in many parishes there is still wanting a terrier of glebe lands and other possessions belonging to the Church, made up accurately to the present time, according to the spirit and intention of Canon 87. Such a terrier and record would be, I am convinced, of essential service and permanent interest, especially if carefully corrected from time to time, as changes in glebe, alterations of fabric, additions of plate, books, church furniture, &c., occur. In some places, I find the clergy, and the laity too, have devoted some of their time thus pleasantly and profitably to the compilation of histories of their parishes and churches, as well as to the preparation of terrier and record. I would again recommend this as a labour of utility and love to others, especially in our country districts, where comparatively more leisure for such work can be had.

#### CHURCH RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT.

During my seventeen years of office there has been a general and marked improvement, not only in the material fabrics of the Churches, but in the conduct and number of the holy services therein. Every newly restored church has become, more or less, a centre for increased zeal and effort to meet more thoroughly the spiritual needs of the district. Cambridge, as in duty and honour bound, has set, and will I trust continue to set, a good example in these and like respects. There is not one church in this principal place of my Archdeaconry on which there has not been, during recent years, large expenditure for renovation and improvement within and without. Several new churches have been built and mission churches and rooms provided, for the increasing population.

#### NATIONAL SCHOOLS CONNECTED WITH THE CHURCH.

Whilst thousands upon thousands of pounds have been spent thus on the material fabrics and on the ministry and services connected therewith; the Churchpeople of Cambridge, in University and Town, have almost alone, at great cost and self-sacrifice of means and time and strength, built, maintained, and extended the primary and secondary schools for the poor and lower middle class; so as to satisfy Government requirement and preserve the sound principles of combined secular and religious education. 2.

In the country parts there has been on the whole equal progress, large outlay and cheerful self-sacrifice for similar objects. It is, indeed, curious, instructive and full of encouragement, to compare the present condition especially of the country churches which are under my supervision, with their condition as described by my predecessors. Only a few Churches now remain unrestored or unimproved. And in the parishes where these few remembrances of past neglect survive, there is a spirit for good at work, which though for a time checked by injurious opposition or depressing indifference, will ere long, I doubt not, triumph over all difficulties and impediments.

#### VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS IN COUNTRY PARISHES.

There is now also scarcely a country parish without a suitable schoolroom, and in the majority of parishes the education there is supported by voluntary contribution and carried on, with due respect to conscience, according to the principles of the Church of England, by the free choice of those chiefly concerned, the parents of the poor children, who shew in general every readiness to let them enjoy the benefits of religious education and inspection thus afforded.

#### BOARD SCHOOLS.

I can see, however, the possibility of a great increase of Board Schools in this county and elsewhere, if the Education Department continue to raise and press unduly the standard for grants, or if the laity do not assist, with somewhat larger contributions, the gifts of the Clergy which form often a burdensome charge on their limited and in many cases, alas! diminishing incomes. I have no wish to make a raid upon Board Schools: but before any commit themselves further to this system, by refusing necessary help to the present voluntarily supported schools, I would have them weigh well the result of experiment made in other parts: and especially in the country districts of Cornwall, where 'the experiment of Board Schools has been and is being remarkably well tried.' Cornwall, as we all are painfully aware, has been pre-eminent, whatever be the reason, for its dissenting proclivities. The result in education there, under favourable conditions of dissent, where hitherto little or no check to its action has been found possible, may be the more fairly observed and tested. The following then is the description of the result of this ex-

periment, as stated publicly by the Bishop of Truro in his Diocesan Conference a fortnight ago, and reported in the *Guardian* of November 10:—"The managers of the Board Schools in Cornwall," said the Bishop, "are selected by the collective elective wisdom of whole districts, after matured and anxious deliberations (many of them in private) with the object of securing fit representatives, often at considerable expense to neighbourhoods which are in earnest. Elected they devote themselves to execute their duties according to their conceptions. But, as one Government Inspector reports, "No clear conception of their duties has yet been attained by the managers of Board Schools in Cornwall." The other Inspector sums up the results by saying "that unless the Clergyman of the parish is a member there is, as a rule, no one in country School Boards either qualified or inclined to superintend the conduct of the school; and the teacher, often young and inexperienced, is left to himself." "However," continued the Bishop, "it was not to found reputations for managers that the system was established. It was in order to secure by due outlay a complete attendance of children, and a more thorough education." "As to the outlay it is confessedly great. The cost of Voluntary Schools, which are fully as successful in their results, varies in Cornwall from 1d. to 3d. in the pound, while the School Board rate varies up to 1s. 1d., and even averages 4½d., and still has not reached its maximum." For the report states "the teaching staff is inadequate." 3.

As to the attendance, we read in Her Majesty's Inspector's Report that the Cornish Boards exercise "no judicious systematic compulsion." That there are "at least 8000 children in one-half of the county who ought to be in attendance and are not, that even on the day of inspection, when numbers are largest, "not quite one-half of the children who are of school age attend;" that in places where full and costly accommodation is provided, half the space stands unused, and the Education Department is informed that "the average attendance is lower in proportion to the population than in the rest of England," "and that therefore, unless serious improvement is made the county of Cornwall will become noted for the ignorance of its inhabitants." As to the education, the standards are well reached; but it is remarked in the Government Report, "that the children now have some notion of geography and grammar, but are not quite such adepts in reading, writing, and, above all, in arithmetic, as they were."

Now remember these Board Schools are, to use the mildest phrase, in their essential constitution non-religious, to meet the scruples of nonconformists and secularists, and to put aside the old teaching in connection with the Church of England. Is the result then satisfactory? There are it appears in Cornwall through this system thirteen schools where there is no religious instruction whatever. Thirty-two

schools where the Bible is only read. Sixty-two out of 161 where nothing now is taught of God and Christ and my duty towards God and my neighbour. And this is the summing of the whole, implying a warning which we may well give heed to as good citizens and good Christians, not to say good churchmen. "As board schools," said the Bishop of Truro, "cost more than voluntary schools, and we have more board schools than any other county in proportion, we are paying at a higher rate than any other county for schooling. As we have fewer children at school we pay a very great deal more, and get less good out of it. And as we have a larger proportion of irreligious schools, we are paying this larger quota for a smaller result and of a poorer quality,—a quality of which we dread the results both in this world and the next."

Notwithstanding all this, wherever, brethren, Board Schools are established amongst us, I do urge most strongly that clergy and churchmen generally, be ready to take an active share in their management, to lease their school rooms on nominal rent to the Board for certain hours each day of secular instruction, retaining of course the trusts of the school in their own hands and employing the premises for the rest of the hours of the day and week, both for religious instruction to such children as attend, for missionary and instructive meetings, parochial uses, &c.

Let not, however, the clergy and churchpeople be responsible for saddling the parishes with Board Schools; though holding themselves ready to mitigate, as far as they are able, any evil which may arise and to supply by other means the good religious influence, definite teaching and training which the tendency of the School Board system seems almost necessarily to undermine and destroy.

#### CHURCHYARDS.

I pass on now to the question of our Churchyards and consecrated burial grounds. After many years of strife and debate a new Burial Act has been passed with the sanction or active help of the two Archbishops and many of the Bishops—our own Bishop I am myself thankful to say not agreeing thereto. This new Act was deprecated we know by the great majority of the Clergy, and as far as can be judged, by discussion and divisions in meetings and conferences, by a very large number, if not the larger proportion of the faithful Church laity. 4.

Many previous measures had been proposed, notably by the late Government and their supporters, to meet and satisfy the alleged grievance of Nonconformists in this matter. That the grievance could not really have been widely felt seemed proved by the fact that even where unconsecrated burial places existed, the others were preferred, though they involved the service of the Church of England and of its Ministers;



and this in cases where no family ties or feeling could be alleged as determining the choice.

However, wisely or unwisely, the Act has passed and is now the Law of the land.

As Section 6 states "At any burial under this Act all persons shall have free access to the churchyard or graveyard in which the same shall take place. The burial may take place at the option of the person having the charge of or being responsible for the same, either with or without any religious service or with such Christian and orderly religious service at the grave, as such person shall think fit; and any person or persons who shall be thereunto invited, or be authorized by the person having the charge of or being responsible for such burial, may conduct such service or take part in any religious act thereat. The words 'Christian service' in this section shall include every religious service used by any church, denomination, or person professing to be a Christian."

An effort was made in the Legislature to get rid altogether of the service being in any way Christian, but for the present this has been frustrated.

It does seem hard that those who in the past have thrown scorn and contempt on our consecrated yards should now have power to invade them and employ the services of man or woman, young or old, of any religion that can in the widest sense be called Christian, to conduct these funeral services, on ground solemnly dedicated to Almighty God for the burial of persons according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. If a grievance on one side has been in part or whole removed, a more considerable grievance has been created on the other, which touches very nearly the most solemn convictions and the tenderest feelings of the great majority of us Churchfolk.

As a set off to this innovation in the old Law of Burial, and this invasion of the freehold right of the Parson, a relief in certain cases is made possible with the sanction of the person responsible for the funeral. With such sanction the clergyman may use an alternative service sanctioned by the Bishop, in cases such as have from time to time caused much distress and perplexity of mind; and which, let us honestly acknowledge, have assisted materially, through the urgent appeals of many of the Clergy themselves, to promote the passing of the New Act. 5.

Another power is given in the Act to the Clergy, which I think may wisely and profitably be taken advantage of, with comfort and satisfaction to the mourners and friends, and in accordance with the ascertained wishes of the deceased person: viz., the power to use the service of the Church of England for the Burial of the Dead (and as far as I can see any other service which may be considered suitable), "in any unconsecrated burial ground or cemetery."

On the whole my distinct advice to my brethren—and this I have reason to believe accords with the

advice of our Bishop—is to accept the Act loyally, to work it fairly and considerately, but to keep strictly within the four corners of it—carefully maintaining all the rights which have been distinctly reserved in the Act, and requiring its conditions to be enforced and carried out by others. In some influential quarters the Clergy have been advised to go beyond what the Act sanctions or suggests, and to shew the extreme of generosity by granting the use of the belfry for these exceptional funerals—*i.e.*, to do more than even the chief promoters of the measure in the House of Commons thought reasonable or called for. Such advice appears to many ominously significant of further concessions and trouble, through continued pressure put upon our spiritual rulers.

I cannot think such advice good. The Clergy should act as far as possible together in this matter. Personal or private feelings should be subordinated to the common welfare and to the future good and safety of the National Church. It is right and well to work the Act with every fair consideration for the wishes of those who have forced it on us or helped to pass it, but we ought to be careful to avoid giving offence to our own neighbours and stirring up for them possible annoyance and persecution, by taking some independent line in our own parish which the Act does not require or presume.

#### USE OF THE BELL.

It appertains to the duty of the churchwardens to take care the bells are not rung without proper cause, and the minister *conjointly with them* is to be the judge of the proper cause. Except under very special circumstances they are not authorized, without the consent of the minister, to give orders for the parish bells to be rung: and such special circumstances cannot, it seems to me, be created by the new Act, which distinctly affects only rights of burial in the Churchyard, not any accessories which custom or canon have connected with burial when performed according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England by the ordained ministers of the parish. It has been publicly stated that the Bishops are shortly to meet and put out general suggestions as to the best way of working the new Act. This possibility makes it the more desirable, meanwhile, to avoid doing anything which the Act does not distinctly prescribe, lest it be found difficult to withdraw hereafter from a false or undesirable position.

With respect to the passing bell, where still this custom is observed, I see little or no difficulty. Till the dead body is taken possession of by the person responsible for the funeral—who may, remember, be of different views or feelings from the departed—and till formal notice, as required by the Act, is given, that other services than these of the Clergyman will be employed—there is no reason to recognise differences any more than heretofore. Therefore the Church bell may well perform its accustomed warning call to

solemn prayer for a dying parishioner, and prayer for ourselves, so soon it may be to die also. This would be strictly according to Canon 67. But the moment notice under the Act is given, the Church and its Minister stand aside: and the bell is forthwith silenced.

#### REGISTERING THE FUNERAL.

I do not see any difficulty of conscience or otherwise in the matter of registering the fact of the burial, and simply inserting the name of the person by whom the notice of the funeral was served under the Act—not, remember, of the person officiating, of which no record is required in such cases to be kept. Similar entries by the Parish Priest are found, I am told, in old registers. 6.

#### GENERAL SPIRIT OF THE ACT.

In all other respects the old law remains untouched, and fees are payable to the clergyman and other officers as in other cases "The Act does not interfere with the ownership of property in the Churchyard. The power of selecting the grave, the time of burial, the erection of tombstones, the words of the inscription and other like matters are in the power, and within the cognizance of the clergyman as before. The Act does not interfere with the legal rights of the Incumbent, save as to restricting his power to forbid funerals in the Churchyard unaccompanied with the service of the Church of England. It leaves him in the full exercise of the right of control in all matters essential to the promotion of order and decency within the precincts of the Churchyard." 7.

#### FUTURE BURIAL PLACES.

Closely connected with the subject of the new Act is the question of future burial places for our parishes. In many country parishes respect for the dead and consideration for the living, alike demand that the crowded Churchyards should be at once closed. Where this is the case application should be made without delay to the Home Office for necessary warrant and direction.

It is most undesirable to obtain fresh ground for burials by an extension of the consecrated Churchyard. With the new Act in force and the still, I am sorry to find, loud cries for more concession, even to the opening of our Churches to all sects and denominations, and their confiscation and sale to the highest bidder, according to the notable and astounding scheme put forth under the auspices of the so-called Liberation Society, in May, 1877, I cannot think it well or prudent, as a rule, to enlarge our existing burial places round the Churches. This would only be to give occasion to them who seek occasion to foster fresh contentions with the view to establish fresh claims. 8.

If we had only to deal with conscientious and reasonable Nonconformists we might be willing to



do many things in connection with our churches and churchyards which now we shrink from and resist. I will let the Bishop of Winchester, so full of love and gentleness, so ready to work if possible with all, and so anxious to promote Home reunion, speak on this point instead of me.

"Unhappily," said the Bishop to his Diocesan Conference at Winchester the other day, "Unhappily we know, it has been openly and frequently said that the real reason why the Liberationists have demanded our churchyards is, that the next step should be to take possession of our churches. I need not say that disestablishment and disendowment could come to us in no more terrible form than if the beautiful temples in which our fathers worshipped, which have descended to us through past centuries from the first planting of Christianity in our land, but which have in great numbers been rebuilt or restored by the money of churchmen in the last half century at an expense of forty or fifty millions of money—that all these should be taken from us and given up to the use of those who might teach any and every, or no form of faith and religion. It seems to me therefore desirable to isolate as much as possible the churchyard from the Church."

"The shutting up of old churchyards when over-filled and the opening of cemeteries, or other burial grounds, at a distance from the Church, would be one mode of doing this."

#### CHANGE OF NONCONFORMIST FEELING.

Brethren, would that our differences, within and without the Church, could be wholly removed. Indeed amidst many discordant notes and ominous signs, I yet fancy at times the day is not so distant, when at any rate larger numbers of those who differ from us, will come over to our side. It is said that few families remain permanently Dissenters, especially if they prosper in business or profession, beyond the second or third generation—a significant proof surely that the old National Church has a wonderful hold on the people, and on the good will and affections of those who have the greatest interest in the stability and prosperity of the Commonwealth. The touching and friendly utterances by leading Nonconformist Ministers at the recent Leicester Church Congress, may well encourage the hope of even quicker reunion and absorption. Whilst plainly stating the differences which at present keep us apart, their full acknowledgment of the historical character, the spiritual power, the far reaching influence of the National Church, its lofty aims, its grand Scriptural Liturgy, its magnificent roll of fathers and confessors, of saints and divines—all so different to what we used to hear and read twenty years ago (and which first in Cambridge raised the cry of Church Defence and led to Church Congresses, Diocesan Conferences and the like) from those who then denounced our Prayer Book as soul-destroying, our clergy as fosterers of ignorance and

abettors of tyranny, our Church as worldly and unspiritual, a curse not a blessing to the land—that I do trust, now that the last Nonconformist grievance has been practically removed, there will be found a greater willingness to help and not hinder the Church's work, to unite with rather than separate from us. It may be in the good Providence of God after all that we shall find the saying verified, in a quite altered sense from which it is generally used, that the path through the Churchyard will lead into the Church.

#### CHURCH PROGRESS.

They who now keep from us and often oppose us cannot but acknowledge the marvellous life and energy and feeling—even to excess sometimes—existing within the borders of our Church. Assuredly as far as it is possible to judge from actual careful and enlarged observation through the land, our Church is making rapid strides to overtake the apathy and neglect of the past and prove itself to be in truer fact the National Church.

The very reports of other leading religious bodies testify to the Church's vitality and her increasing favour with the masses, as well as with the more educated and wealthier classes. It seems almost now an accepted axiom that if our Church is to be separated from its present relations with the State and be broken up into discordant, independent, episcopal elements, it will be from the bitterness of extreme parties within—rather than from the cries and opposition of those without. May the Good Lord restrain the perverse wills of heated partisans of both sides, and breathe upon us the spirit of peace and loving submission!

Be it our part and delight to help in removing differences and promoting greater unity in the land, upon the broad scriptural, apostolic, historical lines of the Reformed Church of England, which have sufficed for so long to make the majority work together as one Body in Christ, with due respect to the law and to the legal decisions of the Courts of Law.

#### CHURCH AND STATE.

The Courts of Law do exercise supreme controul not only over members of our Church but over members of all other religions, as well as secular bodies, which have property and trust-deeds.

"All Nonconformist bodies are, like the Church, recognised by the law of the State, and by it are protected in the enjoyment of their rights and property, and are supervised in the use they make of them."  
 "They have no more liberty to alter their Trust-deeds, nor—while continuing in the enjoyment of the buildings or endowments secured by them—to depart from the doctrine, discipline, and religious observances set forth therein than is possessed by the Church of England to alter, or depart from, the formularies set forth in the Book of Common Prayer."

"The Church of England may, by virtue of her very lengthened union with the State, in the matter of making some changes in her services and arrangements, be under State controul to a greater extent than that of any religious Nonconforming body in the country, but the difference in this respect is after all a question of degree and detail and not of principle. And the principle is this, that for the alteration of all or anything set forth in a legal instrument, whether in the Church or amongst Nonconformists, recourse must be had to the authority of the State." Thus all in this sense are State established and controulled. 9.

#### CONVOCATION AND DIOCESAN CONFERENCES.

Now that the powers of Convocation are revived and discussions and suggestions are leading to truer views of the real relations of the State with the Church of England, we may hope, with patience, to see difficulties and objections removed, and the close union of Church and State continued, without the one trenching upon or usurping the rights and powers of the other.

It is a matter of satisfaction and thankfulness with me that I have been privileged to take a share, not only in the effort to revive the action of Convocation, but in actively assisting in its deliberations, and in endeavours to reform its organization, and connect it more distinctly with those important representative bodies—Diocesan Conferences—which now either in fact or distinct avowed intention, exist in every Diocese but Llandaff and Worcester. To adopt the words of the Bishop of Rochester, who has just organised his Conference—"In view of the fact that Diocesan Conferences have already passed out of the region of experiment into that of recognised advantage, if not of real necessity, for me to presume to plead for them would be an impertinence."

#### REFORM OF CONVOCATION.

I do trust our Primate will soon now find a way, as in the Northern Province, to carry out the reform in the representation of the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, so long and urgently prayed for. The denial of this reform hitherto has tended much to restrain the proper influence of Convocation in the Country and Parliament, and the carrying forward of many measures of practical utility, apart from all party views, which would have materially helped to remove blemishes and promote efficiency and unity in the work of the Church.

#### CENTRAL CHURCH COUNCIL.

Of late there has been a pressing call for some Central Church body of Clergy and Laity, which should meet from time to time for the suggestion of common subjects of debate in Diocesan Conferences, so as the better to bring out the living voice of the Church; and generally for consultation on various points affecting the interests and efficiency of the

Church. Without trenching upon the duties and privileges of Convocation as representing the Spirituality, such a standing committee of the Church would, I feel sure, be of great value, as was elaborately argued by the Bishop of Peterborough in his presidential address at the recent Church Congress. In that address it was suggested that representatives chosen by the Diocesan Conferences would aptly form the Central Council so much desiderated.

Already active steps have been taken to work out this idea: and the following Diocesan Conferences have agreed to send representatives to such a Council: Ripon, Bath and Wells, Lichfield, Chichester, Norwich, Truro, Winchester. Our own Bishop has expressed his hearty approval of this new step to strengthen, defend, and enlarge the powers of our Church and to consolidate still further for good the rural dean and diocesan organizations, which, during the last sixteen or twenty years, have done such excellent service.

#### VOLUNTARY LAY HOUSE OF CONVOCATION.

I am in good hope this Central Council of Diocesan Conferences may help forward another pressing matter, the friendly co-operation of the Laity with the legal Convocation. Without going to Parliament, which so many deprecate, the wishes and views of the Laity of the Church may, I believe, in the shape of a Voluntary Lay House, chosen by the Diocesan Conferences or otherwise, be brought into harmonious and useful working with Convocation. Thus if it were agreed, that no resolution or act of Convocation should be formally and finally passed without the previous assent of the majority of this Voluntary Lay House, in any matter of common deliberation, there need be no further difficulty: and what is of essential consequence, no further delay till a theoretically perfect plan has been decided on between Convocation and Parliament.

The plans I have thus referred to may not be the best, but they are practical and to hand. If they do not work perfectly they can be revised and modified hereafter by experience. It has been truly said, "All great works have begun tentatively and experimentally!" Let us then for the sake of our Zion arise and build with the powers and materials within our reach, and humbly implore the gracious help of the Blessed Spirit, the Lord of the Church, to direct and perfect our designs.

#### CHURCH LEGISLATION.

Without dissolving the intimate relations between Church and State which now, with all the friction and tension, happily as I think for both exists, it seems quite feasible that these relations may be improved and the time of the Legislature economized, whilst keeping as heretofore the power of discussion and veto on all Church measures.

Some such plan was proposed a few years ago by the Bishop of London, and has since been actively promoted by the Bishop of Carlisle and Convocation. The more the proposal is studied the more I believe it will commend itself to all fair and reasonable persons, under the altered circumstances and constitution of the House of Commons, as a just solution of many difficulties which mar content and progress. Like other proposals which at last have been adopted, this one has to run the gauntlet of adverse criticism from friends and foes, who at once start up to suggest all possible and impossible impediments to its acceptance by Parliament and the Nation. But this should not deter others who are convinced of its utility and practicability from persistent effort to secure its final acceptance. Depend upon it the Church of England will secure fair consideration and support for its plans of Government and reform from Parliament, as readily as the smaller and multifarious religious bodies of the country have secured it, so soon as its members prove, not only that they have right on their side, but are determined to make worldly politics and party discipline give place to the promotion of the welfare and extension of the Church. 10.

#### DISESTABLISHMENT NO SECURER OF UNITY.

It is folly to suppose that our social troubles and religious differences would be lessened or destroyed by the destruction of the National Church, or by reducing it to the level of the 130 or 150 sects around. We have the high authority of a learned Scotch Divine given in the *Times* of November 11, for stating that almost all the ecclesiastical divisions of the Old World are perpetuated in the United States, and some new ones have been originated: "He certainly" said the Professor to his Divinity Class "had not seen or heard of anything in the United States calculated to make him believe that disestablishment was a cure for Ecclesiastical division."

The example of Ireland is not an encouragement to join Rome on the one hand, or the Liberation Society and the multitude of competing sects on the other, for the promotion of peace and goodwill, or for the extension of the true faith of Christ, or the union of the Churches.

If it be true, as one in high authority and influence has written to me lately, that "Infidelity, Indifference and Vice are far rife than they have been for centuries"—and to a great extent more optimist brethren agree with this sad statement—the remedy rather is to revert to the old paths of faith and duty, and try to strengthen our legislature, our Universities and Schools for good, by imbuing them with a more Church-like religious spirit: by strengthening not weakening the bonds which hold Church and State together: by helping still to sustain our designation as a Christian nation.

The spirit of worldliness and unbelief, of violence and discord, of lust and lawlessness, rampant in this



so-called enlightened 19th century, is not to be exorcised by attenuating our Christian faith, expunging our creeds, destroying the notes and marks and authority of the pure and Apostolic branch of Christ's Church existing in this land in union with the State. Before we agree to leave our moorings and launch this Church and nation on the wide shoreless stormy sea of secularism and infidelity—before we separate Church and State in the vain hope of more liberty, spirituality and unity, we do well to consider what is passing in other lands, and wait with patience to see the end of their hitherto unsatisfactory experiments.

We may well think once, twice, thrice, and a good many more times, before we join the ranks of these who would sweep away with the besom of destruction our grand old National Church.

#### VOLUNTARY ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

After all, the Church of England is the greatest voluntary Church in the world, the Church too of the vast majority of the country, its very enemies bearing witness thereto, by their persistent efforts to prevent an honest personal religious census in England being taken by the Government.

To supplement its endowments, which were never given by the State, the Church receives by free gifts from its own members, about five millions and a half sterling every year,—far more than her endowments, which altogether are not three millions and a half.

And this huge voluntary contribution she expends on schools and charities, on Church institutions and the poor, on church building and ministry and service, on Home and Foreign Missions.

The Church of England is not only the great religious institution of the land but the great provider of education and social charity. Surely it would be akin to madness, for members within or foes without, to destroy the national character of this grandest and noblest of the institutions of our land, the oldest and most beneficent; so intimately bound up with its history and welfare. Rather let us choose the better part, to defend and extend this mighty engine for good, whilst we endeavour honestly and earnestly to correct abuses and defects in her management and perfect her organization and efficient action. In the words of John Wesley to his preachers I would say to all "Be Church of England men still. Do not cast away the peculiar glory put upon you and frustrate the design of Providence." 11.

#### IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES IN THE ARCHDEACONRY.

But I must hasten to a conclusion.

The last seventeen years have seen great changes and improvements in our midst. We have now established, in this Archdeaconry and Diocese means, societies and organizations, of the most varied kinds, for the details of which I need but refer to our Ely

Diocesan Calendar and to the Conference and other reports annually circulated.—Faithfully, wisely, and persistently employed, in conjunction with our parochial machinery, our restored Churches, our religious day and Sunday Schools, with improved, more frequent and elastic services for young and old: more active, energetic, self-denying ministry; aided by a more free and liberal employment of the spiritual gifts of our faithful laity, it is impossible but with the Divine Blessing, we should win more and more the hearts and sympathies of rich and poor.

Sometimes indeed I seem to observe, here and there, a lack of hearty self-sacrificing zeal, an absence of energy and determination, of due thought and careful preparation sadly injurious to efficient ministry and acceptable service.

#### SUGGESTED METHOD OF WORK.

Brethren of the Clergy, now more than ever the Parish Priest and his assistant Curates and helpers, should be seen visiting their flocks from house to house, warning here, encouraging there, carrying in every possible way by look, word and act, in public and private life, the message of Salvation, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus our Lord: and feeding with the Bread of Life, the bodies, souls, and spirits of those who have been solemnly by the law of this Church and Realm committed to their charge. The more we feel or see that others, openly or secretly, are striving to lure our flocks to other and alien pastures, or to render them discontented with their own; the more we should pray and watch and strive, in conjunction with our lay helpers, the Churchwardens, district visitors, missionary collectors, day and Sunday school teachers, communicants and others like minded, to attract and keep them within the fold of the Church, and bring all who have been committed to our charge to such ripeness and perfectness of faith in Christ, and such devotion to the Church, that there be no room in our parishes for error in religion, diversity of worship, or viciousness of life.

Recent Church legislation has given far greater liberty than formerly for the arrangement and provision of services, in Church and Mission House, in public and private places, so as to meet all needs by the most varied machinery.

Withal, the greater freedom of worship in our restored Churches, the deeper feeling which has been growing that we are one family in Christ, and that the Parish Church should be the House of all, the place of common worship, with as little distinction as possible, should encourage Clergy and Laity, to try to meet the spiritual wants of all the parishioners according to the doctrine and worship and discipline of the Church of England. Variety of services, therefore, frequent and varied opportunities of Holy Communion, public catechizing, children's services, regular confirma-

tion, communicant and Bible classes, special services and addresses to men, and to women, and to servants at suitable hours separately, the formation of Church guilds, Sunday school associations, missionary branches, Church of England temperance societies—these are some of the many ways in which good work may be done and our people trained, encouraged, united in Christian knowledge, in holy living, in true sanctified Church life, in vigorous Christian effort.

#### PAROCHIAL MISSIONS.

I would also venture strongly to recommend, from personal trial and experience, the holding every few years of a Parochial mission in each country parish or group of parishes, whereby the old message of the Gospel and its blessed influences through the instrumentality of our Church, her ordinances and sacraments, may be the more strikingly brought home, not only for the conversion of the openly profane, the careless, and the vicious; but for the strengthening, refining, perfecting of the more regular and godly of our congregations.

The alarming symptoms of our time when Atheism stalks abroad with brazen face, encouraged rather than opposed by some who would fain free us Churchmen, as they piously declare, from state fetters, that we may be more spiritually minded and more faithful to our Heavenly Lord and King, should make us, not only more wary in these dangerous days, but more devoted to duty, more anxious to make full proof of our ministry, more determined by God's help henceforth, in life and conversation and ministry, and in the employment of our own and others spiritual gifts, to be wholly faithful to Him who has distinctly called us to high duty and service in the cause of His mystical body the Church.

Brethren, Clergy and Laity, be not faithless, but believing. Go on resolutely in the path of holy duty, for Christ's sake and for the Church which He has purchased with his own most precious Blood. Does not His Gracious Promise encourage us amidst all our responsibilities, trials and sufferings for His sake: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of Life."

#### DEATHS AND REMOVALS—FRESH CALLS TO FAITHFULNESS.

Since I became Archdeacon, two thirds of the parishes in my charge have changed their authorized Pastors. Death has removed many dear and faithful labourers, Clergy and Laity, in this part of the Vineyard of the Church. We miss the well-known faces of some who have cheered us in the past, who were foremost amongst their fellows in good works, who were ready to give their time and abilities, their means and influence to improve our organization, to increase our Diocesan and Mission Funds, to give vigour, freshness, life, to our parish services, our choral



festivals, our rural dean and diocesan conferences our Convocation, and to all other efforts and means suggested for the active promotion and extension of the welfare and benefits of the people through the National Church. 12.

Their reward is with the most High. Be it our part to be encouraged by their good example, to be warned if need be by their partial failures.

Our time is short. Let us prepare ourselves then with all seriousness and alacrity for the day when we too must give up the account of our ministry and stewardship, that we may do it with joy and not with grief at the call of our Divine Master and Lord, who is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be ascribed all glory, power, praise and dominion for ever. Amen.

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In the afternoon there was a Conference for two hours of the Clergy and Laity at the Guildhall, which was well attended. There was a very interesting discussion carried on with respect to the operation of the New Burial Act and Church works and wants in the Archdeaconry.

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#### NOTES.

1. For Tables of Fees and duties of Officers, see Ely Diocesan Calendar. Procurations or Synodals are small ecclesiastical fees payable by the Clergy and others.

2. The Church Schools of Cambridge provide for 5060 children at an annual expense of more than £1000. See Report of Church of England Primary Schools of Cambridge for 1879—80.

3. Board Rates in this county are sometimes higher—in Haverhill reaching to 2s. 6d. in the pound.

4. 15,000 Clergy protested against the measure; also many Church Donors of land, several Diocesan Conferences, our own amongst them, &c.

5. The Bishop in his recent Pastoral prescribes for use the alternative services agreed on by Convocation in 1879, and gives advice upon certain points of the New Burial Act and Consecration of Ground.

6. "The place for noting by whom the ceremony was performed should be left vacant, and the words 'certified under the Burials Amendment Act, 1880,' be written along the bottom of the particular entry."—*See Pastoral.*

7. See valuable pamphlet on "The New Burial Act. What it does and what it does not do," with Text of the Act, by Rev. A. T. Lee, Secretary of Church Defence Institution, 9, Bridge-street, Westminster, S.W. Price 6d.

This Institution deserves increased support. Its monthly organ, *The National Church*, price 1d., is full of interest.

8. "The sweeping revolutionary and confiscating proposals" referred to will be found in appendix D of an able book, "The Englishman's Brief on behalf of His National Church," published at 1s. or 1s. 6d., by S. P. C. K., Northumberland-avenue, Charing-cross.

9. For further proof see above work, p.p. 80 to 96.

10. See Draft Bill prepared by the Lower House of Convocation in 1878, called "An Act to provide Facilities for the Amendment from time to time of the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England."

11. "Weeley not a Wesleyan." Tract, price 1d., by Rev. A. A. Dawson, Rector of Necton, Norfolk.

The works of the Heme Re-union Society, published by Wells Gardner, London, supply important information and suggestion.

12. Amongst others may be specially noted the following who have been taken from us during the year, three out of the four with much suddenness, Clement Francis, Esq., Canon Birkett, Rev. J. Kempthorne, and W. T. Crole, Esq., so well known at our Choral gatherings.

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\*.\* The following Charges of the Archdeacon of Ely are published by Deighton, Bell, and Co., Cambridge, and are as follows:

Church Organization and Efficient Ministry, 1866.  
 Church Union and Progress, 1867.  
 Hints to Churchwardens, 1868.  
 The New Church Rate Act, 1869.  
 The New Education Act, 1870.  
 Responsibilities of Churchwardens, 1871.  
 Church Defence an Urgent Duty, 1872.  
 Church Extension and Religious Education, 1872.  
 Some Practical Suggestions, 1874.  
 Timely Warnings, 1875.  
 Diocesan Fund, Temperance Education, 1876.  
 Past Efforts, 1878.  
 The Outlook, 1880.  
 New Burial Act and Church Legislation, 1880.

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